

ARARAT.

A SEARCHLIGHT ON ARMENIA.

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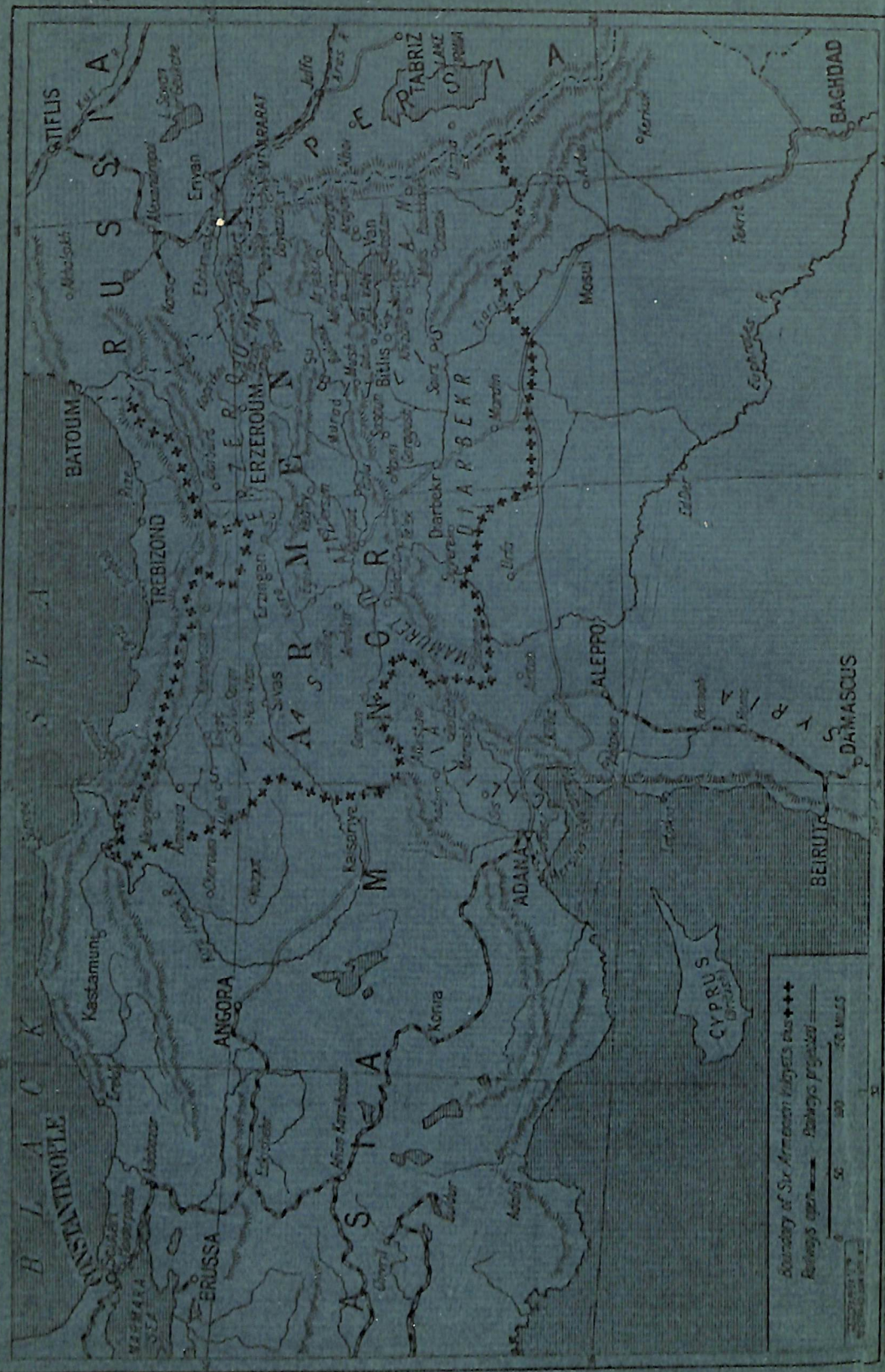
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TURKISH ARMENIA



Current Notes.

According to the recent letter of Boghos Nubar Pasha to *The Times*, which will be found on another page in this issue, and judging by the meagre telegrams that have appeared in the papers, it would seem that the early settlement of the Armenian Question, which we foreshadowed last month, is now an accomplished fact, the diplomatic bartering between the Porte and the Powers having been brought to a conclusion. We also postponed last month any jubilation over what was imminent until the actual promulgation of the orders. Though we are still without authoritative information, there is sufficient known to enable us to form an opinion on the final settlement; and we cannot help giving expression to the opinion that the result is scarcely commensurate with the expectations that were formed for ensuring a peaceful Armenia.

The letter of Boghos Nubar Pasha to *The Times* is, from a diplomatic point of view, as correct a document as one could wish to see. We prefer, however, to judge of his own personal views by his utterances on other occasions (*vide* our October issue), and by his informal statements expressed to the correspondent of *The Manchester Guardian*, which will also be found in this issue. We absolutely agree with him that *if these reforms are loyally carried out*, as he repeats more than once, suggesting a lingering doubt in his mind, then there will be no Armenian Question. But are we not once more trusting to the promises of Turkey, which history has proved over and over again to be absolutely worthless? The susceptibilities of the Porte have been spared, and European control, which was the bed-rock of our demands, has been put on one side, the superstructure being built on shifting sand.

The Powers are, no doubt, congratulating themselves that they are well out of a troublesome business; but though we shall be the first to raise our pæans of joy if our fears are proved groundless by the loyal application of the reforms, we cannot refrain from recording our view that, at first sight, the Powers have been too yielding in a matter that is fraught with dire possibilities. Unless there is some provision in the agreement that they will keep a fatherly eye over the application of the reforms, and ensure that the European Inspectors-General are not mere pawns at the disposal of the Porte, the Armenian Question cannot be considered as dead. A quarter of a loaf may be better than no bread at all, provided that the quarter is really bread and not a stone; and as we cannot question the decision of the Powers, let us but re-echo the pious hope of Boghos Pasha that *these reforms will be loyally carried out*. On this alone hangs the future—whether it will produce a peaceful Armenia, or be attended by consequences even more disastrous for the Ottoman Empire in Asia than those which the Macedonian reforms involved for the Ottoman Empire in Europe.

The details of the new scheme, so far as we can gather, may be summarised as follows :—There will be two Inspectors-General, to whom will be entrusted the general control of the judicial and civil administration and of the gendarmerie and police in the two sections into which the six vilayets, or Armenia, will be divided. They will also have the military forces at their disposal. These Inspectors-General, whose tenure of office will be for ten years and who will be subjects of minor European States, will be invested with powers to dismiss all functionaries. Local languages will be officially recognised. The Hamidieh cavalry will be re-organised ; and regional military service will be adopted in peace time. In the Provincial Councils of Bitlis and Van, Christians and Moslems will be equally represented ; while in the other vilayets, representation will be proportional. In the public services, including the police and the gendarmerie, equal representation of Christians and Moslems will be observed as far as possible in future appointments. Questions affecting lands, which have been usurped, will be settled by the Inspectors-General ; and from the taxes collected for educational purposes in each vilayet, a proportionate share will be allotted to the Armenians for education.

There is, however, one important and doubtful point on which information would have been most welcome. It affects the rights and conditions under which the Valis, or Turkish Governors of the vilayets, hold office ; and it is quite possible that the general control exercised by the Inspectors-General may bring them into conflict with these Valis. Though it is stipulated that if an Inspector-General asks for the dismissal of a Vali, the Sublime Porte must give its decision within four days, nothing has transpired as to the procedure, should the decision of the Porte be against the Inspector-General. In such a case the position of an Inspector-General would be untenable. We cannot doubt that the difficulty has been provided for, and it would be a relief to know that the contingency is just such as would be met by an appeal to the Powers, whose decision ought to be final and binding. Without such a provision we fear that our faith in the genuineness of the intentions of the Porte would be very much shaken.

In connection with these reforms, information comes from Brussels that General de Guise, Military Commandant of Liège, has been appointed administrator of the military forces in Armenia under the scheme of reforms. Much will depend on the personal character and the administrative abilities of the officials selected, and the extent to which they are able to hold their own in the matter of right and justice, without the hampering interference of the authorities at Constantinople. With regard to the selection of General de Guise, the news seems somewhat premature. In all probability he is a candidate.

It was not unconnected with what had leaked out regarding the negotiations for reforms that the Armenians of Turkey decided to abstain from participation in the Turkish General Election. By the middle of this month the delegates of the Armenian parties were informed by the representatives of the Committee of Union and Progress that as they had decided too late to participate, they could not now expect the admission of more than 13 of their candidates. As we go to press, news comes that owing mainly to the intervention of Talaat Bey, the Minister of the Interior, the differences which had arisen between the Committee and the Armenian parties on the subject of Armenian Parliamentary representation appear to have been settled, as the Armenians have agreed to a compromise whereby they obtain 16 seats.

The powerful lever for wringing concessions out of Turkey for railways and communications has been her chronic state of financial difficulty, and for accommodations to meet her requirements she has had to pay heavily. Her statesmen will, perhaps, wake up some day from their mediæval slumber and recognise that a sound administration and the proper commercial exploitation of the untouched mineral wealth of the Empire will mean a full treasury, and also regular salaries to the civil and military staffs. There would then be no necessity for such a temporary law as that now promulgated by *irade* of the Sultan, increasing the already exorbitant taxes. It is enacted that, in order to meet the deficit of the Budget, the following taxes be increased from March 1st, 1914, to Feb. 28th, 1915 :—

- (i.) The Temetivi tax by 25 per cent.
- (ii.) The tax on camels, sheep, oxen and other domestic animals by 25 per cent.
- (iii.) Taxes on law-court expenses by 100 per cent.
- (iv.) Taxes on census, passports, etc., by 100 per cent.
- (v.) Stamp duty on bills of exchange and petitions from 1 to 2 piastres.

We would draw the attention of our readers to the " Announcements " page for a Lantern Lecture which Miss Amelia Bernard will give on " The Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau." Miss Irene St. Clair will kindly sing sacred solos in keeping with the lecture. The chair will be taken by the Rev. Prof. G. Thoumaian, B.D. Miss Bernard has very generously offered to devote the proceeds of the entertainment to the fund for establishing and endowing village schools in Armenia. This London fund is under the control of The Armenian United Association of London, and its laudable object, for which contributions are urgently needed, is to establish schools, where none exist, for the education mainly of children who have been orphaned and left destitute through chronic misrule in their country.

Since its issue of September last, we have waited month after month for the welcome appearance of our friend and contemporary, "Armenia" of New York, whose pages, political and literary, showed an amount of zeal and talent on the part of its editor which merited the support of Armenians throughout the world. We are rejoiced to find that, after a temporary eclipse of four months, our old friend "Armenia" has blossomed out in its February number under the new title of *The Oriental World*. Though it is intended to embrace between its covers the scope of matters, literary and political, affecting the Near Eastern Countries, it is a pleasure to see Armenian interests still occupying the major portion of its pages. We wish our contemporary a successful and continuous life.

In our last issue we congratulated Mr. Aneurin Williams, Chairman of the British Armenia Committee, on his selection as candidate for the parliamentary representation of North-West Durham. Our felicitations now go to him with redoubled emphasis on his election as M.P. for that Division. It is an asset to the cause of Armenia to have so redoubtable a champion sitting on the benches of the British House of Commons.

Solution of the Armenian Question and Problems in Asia Minor.

By X.

All competent authorities agree that the only solution of the Armenian question that can be reconciled with the existence of the Ottoman Empire in Asia Minor is the creation of an administration for Armenia, not only under European control, but under the direct authority of European administrators. The Turks, with all their good and attractive qualities, are incapable of directing a proper administration. They often make good subordinate officials, but until a new generation of educated Turks has been trained in sound administrative methods it is useless to expect them to take the right steps towards a reform of their own system. They recognise the need for foreign instructors, but they are unwilling to give European instructors the necessary authority. The European Powers that really wish to preserve the Turkish Empire must save the Turks from themselves by insisting that whenever a European Governor or Inspector-General is appointed in Armenia or in any other Turkish province he shall have enough independent authority to make sure that his orders will be

carried out. There is also another obstacle to the success of any merely Turkish reforms. Even the best and most modern Turks cannot yet bring themselves to look upon a Christian fellow-subject as an equal, or as having a right to the same sort of justice as a Mussulman. It will be long before this spirit disappears. In the meantime it is necessary that the government of the Christian races of Turkey should be controlled, in the interests of the Turks themselves, by Europeans, whose work it would be to see that justice were done to Mussulmans and Christians alike.

Unless this is done the complete ruin of Turkey is to be expected in a comparatively short time. The great mass of the Armenians would prefer to remain subject to the Sultan. The Armenian revolutionary organisation was for several years on good terms with the Young Turkish Committee of Union and Progress, and still keeps up confidential relations with some Turkish Ministers, though it is prepared to strike a very hard blow if its demands for good government are perpetually ignored. A revolution in Armenia would, however, mean Russian intervention, not only in favour of the Armenians, but also in favour of the Kurds, among whom a pro-Russian party already exists. But Russian intervention would at once be followed by German intervention in other parts of Asia Minor, and probably by a general scramble among the Great Powers to obtain full control of those districts of Asia Minor in which they are specially interested. This would be the end of an independent Turkish Empire. The danger can only be postponed, and perhaps averted, if the Great Powers come to the help of Turkey and by compelling the Turkish Government to place the work of administration in the hands of capable Europeans give Turkey, in spite of herself, a chance of regeneration.

In Asia Minor it is not only the financial situation that is serious. The Turkish peasant population has been so depleted during the last eighteen months that the fields have remained uncultivated, and the inhabitants are, in large districts, already suffering from want. The winter may bring famine. None but women, children, and old men have been left in the villages, and, as the Turkish women are not accustomed to work in the fields, they have remained at home, in mute and patient want, waiting for the return of their men. During the summer and early autumn, when fruit and vegetables are plentiful, the pinch of want has not been so severe, but, with the approach of winter, the outlook will be very dark in many parts of Asia Minor. The demobilisation of the large army which the Turkish military authorities have gathered in Thrace would not now materially relieve the pressure. It is too late to reap, even if the crops had been sown. In the meantime the tax-gatherer is busy and ruthless, for the Treasury needs more and more money to feed and furnish the army in the field.

Alongside of this economic situation there are political situations that urgently need attention. The Arab question, which seemed threatening a few months ago, is less serious at present because the Central Government has promised to redress Arab grievances and to

fulfil Arab wishes. But if the promises are not kept there will be trouble. The principal danger lies, however, in Armenia. At the time when Turkey expected to have to comply with the provisions of the Treaty of London and when Sofia seemed certain to be the real capital of the Balkans, the Turks began to pay attention to the Armenian question, and to understand that, unless Asia Minor was to go the way of Roumelia, the Armenian provinces must be well enough governed to check the tendency of several Armenian leaders to look towards Russia. But as soon as the Balkan States began to quarrel among themselves, and Bulgaria withdrew her troops from Thrace in order to throw them against Servia, the Turks concentrated their attention more and more upon Europe and postponed the idea of introducing serious reforms in Armenia. They asked for English inspectors to help them in organising the reforms, but it was rather with the object of playing England off against Russia, than in order to take the work seriously in hand. The successful re-occupation of Adrianople and the conclusion of peace with Bulgaria raised Turkish spirits to such an extent that the Armenian question seemed to them to be a negligible quantity, and the Government took no steps to punish the Turkish troops which had committed excesses on Armenians in the neighbourhood of Rodosto.

A large number of influential Turks and their advisers are in favour of the establishment of complete international control over all the receipts of the Ottoman Treasury; but they will not hear of any control over expenditure. They are prepared to let Europe manage their resources for them, but intend to do the spending themselves. They have been encouraged in their willingness to place European Commissioners in charge of their revenues by the extremely friendly attitude taken up towards them during the last two or three years by the Debt Commissioners. Those who have read the minutes of the proceedings of the Debt Commission during the last twelve months, and have compared them with the minutes a few years old, have been struck by the change from the severe and stringent tone that used to prevail during the meetings of the Commissioners, to the deferential, almost subservient tone of the recent proceedings. Under these circumstances the Young Turkish authorities think that the extension of European control to all branches of revenue would not be an evil, and might be a good. It would certainly result in an increase of revenue, and would inspire European creditors with greater confidence. The Ottoman Government would thus have more money to spend, and would be sure that a well-disposed European organisation would not try to control or to check the spending of it.

It need not be pointed out that this arrangement would be somewhat one-sided from the point of view of the European investor. However favourable he may be towards Turkey, or, rather, because he is favourable, he would like to see the spending of the money controlled as well as the receipts. Turkey is a country with great resources, which might bring prosperity to the whole Empire if they were properly

developed and husbanded. Although these resources have been heavily mortgaged during the last five years, the Young Turks have increased the debt by more than £40,000,000; and without reckoning the expenditure on the recent wars, they are still ample to provide a basis for the financial regeneration of the country. There are coal deposits of enormous richness near Erzerum in Armenia, there is a vast amount of other mineral wealth, and there is timber in abundance. There are the agricultural possibilities of the country, which would soon be realized if the fiscal system did not discourage production and if the irrigation of Mesopotamia were carried out. But up to the present all these possibilities have been counteracted by bad politics. Strange though it may seem, the troubles of Turkey are political rather than economic. She has exchanged the blighting rule of a despotic Sultan, who was in some ways a political genius and in other an impediment to all progress, for the rule, almost as despotic, of a Party which, until recently, neglected and was perhaps obliged to neglect, all other considerations in order to save itself from political, and its members from physical, destruction.

Now this appears to have changed; or, to be precise, it is possible that the outlook may change if the one dominant Turkish Party, the Party of Union and Progress, is able to rise to the occasion. Opposition has disappeared. The Party has the field practically to itself. The question of Turkey just now is the question whether the leading men of the Party will prove to be statesmen or will remain mere revolutionary politicians. They have a great opportunity. It came when the Bulgarians were so foolish as to imagine, against the advice of their best military men, that the Turks would not walk into Adrianople as soon as the Bulgarian Army walked out of it. The Treaty of Peace with Bulgaria has not only sanctioned the policy of the Party of Union and Progress, but has given the Party very great prestige. For the first time since the Turks reconquered Azoff, after Peter the Great had taken it from them, Turkey has been allowed to violate the unwritten law that no territory once taken from the Turks and incorporated by treaty in the Dominions of a Christian State, shall ever pass under Ottoman rule again. The Treaty of London gave Thrace to Bulgaria. The Treaty of Constantinople gives it back to Turkey. This the Party of Union and Progress has achieved. For the first time it has acquired a kind of right to be looked upon by Mohammedans as having increased the territory of Islam, and for the first time it has done something to atone for its impiety when it dethroned the Commander of the Faithful and put another Caliph in his place.

For the great mass of Turks and of the other Mohammedans of the Ottoman Empire, Abdul Hamid, the recluse of Beylerbey, is still the Caliph, and his successor, Mehmed V, is a usurper whom a clique of free-thinkers puts in his place. As long as Abdul Hamid lives this situation will remain, though its danger for the Young Turks may be more or less serious in proportion as they govern foolishly or wisely. If they are wise they will be satisfied with what they have regained in

Europe and will hold aloof from the quarrels of the Balkan States. If they are foolish they will aim at playing the part formerly played by Abdul Hamid, that of profiting by the disagreements between Bulgaria and Greece, Bulgaria and Servia, and eventually Servia and Greece, in order to regain influence in Europe and perhaps to obtain virtual possession of Macedonia and Salonica. Such a policy would flatter the *amour propre* of the Party of Union and Progress, but it would ruin the Empire, either quickly by bringing about another military conflict, in which the Turks would almost certainly be beaten, or slowly by keeping up the financial strain and the drainage of men in Asia Minor that have become almost intolerable.

The Coming Reforms in Armenia.

I.

BOGHOS NUBAR PASHA ON THE NEW SCHEME.

The following is a translation of a letter in French, addressed by Boghos Nubar Pasha to the Editor of *The Times*, which appeared in the issue of that paper of February 20th, 1914 :—

Mr. Editor,—It is now nearly a year, since the question of Armenian Reforms began once more to come before the attention of Europe, that you received a letter, which I addressed to you, with a view to placing the question in its true light, and indicating more precisely the nature of the claims of the Armenians of Turkey, who have entrusted me with the task of upholding their cause. In refuting the more or less utopian aims that were ascribed to them, I had formally declared that, putting aside all thoughts of separatism and autonomy, the people of the Armenian provinces asked for nothing more than to remain Ottoman subjects, provided that, by the putting into execution of the reforms stipulated in the Treaty of Berlin, an end might be put to the acts of brigandage, of bloodshed, and of the seizure of land—outrages of which they had been made the victims for very many years; and provided also that security and justice should be assured to them, as by these alone could they have any prospect of carrying on their avocations and of living in peace.

Since to-day, after protracted and strenuous negotiations, an agreement has just been concluded between the Powers and the Sublime Porte, and the reforms, so long and so anxiously awaited, are at length about to be realised, would you permit me, Mr. Editor, to express through the medium of *The Times*, the feelings which are uppermost in the minds of all Armenians at the thought that a new era is about to unfold itself for those unfortunate populations. I would express our whole-hearted gratitude to the Powers, who, on the generous initiative of Russia, took our cause in hand, and to the Government of His

Sublime Majesty, the Sultan, who, recognising the loyalty of the Armenians and the justice of their modest demands, has, at one stroke, both as an act of foresight and of high political import, averted a danger which threatened the very existence of the Empire, and delivered the populations of the Eastern provinces from the intolerable and unmerited sufferings which they had so long endured.

We should not be alone in giving vent to our joy, for the question of our reforms, as I have always declared, was no longer a matter of interest to us alone; it had assumed a character which made it of European concern, from the time that it became apparent that, without our reforms, the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Turkey in Asia would be jeopardised. That is a contingency which has to-day been happily averted, if the Sublime Porte encourages by every means the honest and full application of the reforms. There is consequently reason to congratulate the Powers who, by a unanimity which is no longer disputed, and from the moment that an agreement was brought about among them, succeeded in procuring a practical result, the importance of which in its bearing towards the peace of Europe cannot be exaggerated. It is to be hoped that they will watch the application of the reforms in the same spirit of harmony when these are in operation, and of unanimity, and so secure their success.

The Powers have rendered to Turkey every satisfaction calculated to spare the susceptibilities of the Porte. It is in this way that, by giving up the idea of amalgamating the vilayets into one single province, they have accepted their grouping into two sections, as the Porte desired; and that, besides, the control properly so called, to be exercised by special European officials, which was the basis of our demands, has been abandoned.

The Porte has therefore derived entire satisfaction on these points and on others besides, to which a special importance was attached; and we can but rejoice that diplomacy has been able to discover a solution which takes into account every interest, and which ought not to endanger either the working out, or the efficacy of the reforms.

It now only remains further to watch for their realisation, and I am fully convinced that the Porte, being quite as much interested as the Armenians, will strive with energy towards their fulfilment. For it cannot be doubted that it is only by an application of the reforms in sincerity, in completeness, and unreservedly, that there will cease to be any longer an Armenian question. Putting the reforms into execution means, in fact, the restoration of security and of justice, the assurance that natural wealth and economic development will be fostered; that is to say, the entire accumulated activities and energies, which were lying dormant, will be put to the service of the Empire, or, in a word, it will mean the resuscitation of Turkey, for whom the Armenians, loyal subjects and good patriots, will labour with all their ability and with all their might.

Accept, Mr. Editor, the assurance of my most profound respect.

BOGHOS NUBAR,

President of the Armenian National Delegation

Paris, Feb. 16th, 1914.

II.

The following report of an interview the Paris correspondent of *The Manchester Guardian* had with Boghos Nubar Pasha, on the subject of the coming reforms, appeared in the issue of that paper of Feb. 18th, 1914:—

I had an interview this afternoon with Boghos Nubar Pasha, who has been instrumental in bringing about the settlement of the Armenian question. Nubar Pasha was appointed by the Catholicos of Etchmiadzine (the supreme head of the Armenian Church) as his representative in Europe and is President of the Armenian National Delegation, which formulated the Armenian claims during the recent negotiations between Turkey and the Powers. He has a flat in the Avenue du Trocadéro, next door to the *hôtel* of the Prince of Monaco, and I found him this evening in his study surrounded by documents relating to Armenian affairs.

Nubar Pasha gives one the impression of determination combined with a thoroughly reasonable disposition and admirable tact. One can see that he has all the cleverness which the proverb attributes to his race, and that he could be relied upon to bring to a successful issue by diplomatic methods any scheme on which he has made up his mind. His skilful conduct of the Armenian case has smoothed over many difficulties and greatly contributed to the success of the negotiations. He received me most cordially, and expressed in warm terms his appreciation and that of his fellow-countrymen of the attitude of the *Manchester Guardian* in regard to Armenia.

ARMENIANS STILL OTTOMANS.

Nubar Pasha gave me in a clear and business-like way a sketch of the various events that have led up to the present arrangement, paying a tribute in passing to the special services rendered to the Armenian cause by Gladstone and Francis de Pressensé. He had, he said, accepted the invitation of the Catholicos of Etchmiadzine only on condition that the demands made should be reasonable and possible and that all parties in Armenia should agree upon them. That condition, he further said, had been fulfilled; there were political parties in Armenia as elsewhere, but Armenians were unanimous in regard to the reforms desired. What they had asked for, in fact, was simply that clause 61 of the Treaty of Berlin should be carried out. They did not want autonomy, which was impossible, since there were in Turkish Armenia, out of a total of two and a half million inhabitants, about a million Armenians against 660,000 Turks and 330,000 Kurds, half of whom are nomads, and about 500,000 belonging to different races and religions, and a minority could not govern the country. Nor did they want separation from Turkey; it was to the interest of Armenians to remain Ottoman subjects provided they were given security and justice. If these necessities were secured to them, their religion and their nationality were safer in the Turkish Empire than they would be if Armenia were annexed by another country. Turkey was tolerant in religious matters, and the Ottoman Armenians had always retained their nationality.

Speaking of the opposition of the Triple Alliance to the Armenian demands in the early days of the negotiations, Nubar Pasha said that it arose chiefly from a belief that the Armenians were not sincere in saying that they did not desire autonomy or separation from Turkey. "When," he said, "they were convinced that we were sincere in that regard, the opposition ceased, and the ambassadors were unanimous in the proposal that they made to the Porte." Nubar Pasha has no illusions about the humanitarian sentiments of the European Powers. "They intervened," he said, "because they became convinced that it was their interest to do so. I have always insisted that the Armenian question is a European question. It is to the interest of Europe that the integrity of the Turkish Empire in Asia should be maintained. If reforms were not carried out in Armenia, troubles would be inevitable, with the result that Russia would be obliged to intervene, and there would be an end of the integrity of the Asiatic Ottoman Empire." It was, in Nubar Pasha's opinion, because the Great Powers at last recognised this fact that they took the action which no horror at massacres or sympathy with Armenian sufferings would ever have induced them to take.

CONCESSIONS TO THE PORTE.

I asked Nubar Pasha whether he was satisfied with the terms of the agreement arrived at and whether Armenians generally were satisfied with them. "Of course," he replied, "they are not all that we hoped for. Concessions have had to be made to the susceptibilities of the Porte, such as the withdrawal of the provision for European control, and the substitution of two provinces each with an Inspector General for the original proposal of one Governor General for the whole of Armenia." Another change regretted by the Armenians was, Nubar Pasha said, the abandonment of the proposal that all the *conseils généraux* should be composed half of Christians and half of Mussulmans. Under the actual scheme this is the case in only two of the six vilayets; in the other four the representation of Christians and Mussulmans is in proportion to their respective populations. In fact, Nubar Pasha said, the Porte obtained satisfaction on all the essential points on which it insisted.

Nevertheless, while he does not conceal his regret that the Powers yielded on so many points, Nubar Pasha considers that the reforms actually agreed upon give very appreciable advantages and that they will prove an adequate remedy if they are loyally carried out. This, he says, is also the opinion of practically the whole of the Armenians, although some of them feel somewhat disappointed. Although there is no European control, the Inspectors General are to be chosen from the smaller European nations, and the powers given them are quite sufficient, if good men are chosen for the position, to enable them to put down brigandage and outrage, bring about security for life and property, and establish a proper administration of justice. These are the essential points. Then, again, Nubar Pasha considers that the

regularisation of the irregular troops, the Hamidieh, which have been the cause of the outrages, and the settlement of the agrarian question are very important gains. If the reforms promised are loyally carried out, the Armenians who have been dispossessed will have their land restored to them or be indemnified.

"If," Nubar Pasha added, "the Porte carries out sincerely and with perfect loyalty the reforms just as they have been granted—and I have confidence that it will do so, because it understands the gravity of the problem—there will no longer be an Armenian question."

"From London to Armenia,"

By ARAM RAFFI.

(Continued from p. 218.)

III.

After crossing the Persian frontier, we come into the Sanjak of *Hakari*, south of *Van*, with which it now forms one vilayet, called the Vilayet of *Van*. This combination of two distinct vilayets into one was made, for political purposes, in 1876. In early times Turkey was divided into large provinces, named after the races dwelling in them, *e.g.*, Moldavia, Wallachia, Servia, Greece. In the seventeenth, and in the beginning of the eighteenth, centuries, these provinces were governed, as a rule, by Armenian Amiras. Later, when the Turks feared that the question might arise of the independence of certain races, *e.g.*, the Greeks, these provinces were split up into vilayets and named after their principal towns. In 1876 there was a re-division of these vilayets, in many of which the Armenians constituted the majority of the population. The Turkish Government aimed at representing the Armenians as a minority and, therefore, joined the vilayets peopled by Armenians to neighbouring vilayets peopled by Mussulmans. Now, in the vilayet of *Hakari*, the population consisted chiefly of Kurds, while that of *Van* was, for the most part, composed of Armenians, so these two vilayets were made into one. At the present time there are not many Armenians in the Sanjak of *Hakari*, which is almost exclusively populated by Kurds. There are, however, a great many *Nestorians* in the *Joulamerik* District, a little to the north of which is situated the village of *Qudshanis*, where is the seat of *Marshimon*, the Nestorian Patriarch, head of the *Nestorian Church*. He, with his men, most of whom are armed, maintains a sort of independence, like the Armenians of *Zeitoun*. The dignity he holds is hereditary; the holder of the see is succeeded by one of his nearest kinsmen of the younger generation; as a rule, a choice is made of two children, in case of the death of one of them. The selection of these two is made before

birth, and, should one prove a girl, she becomes a nun. The boys set apart for this office are under strict rule from birth; like other Nestorian bishops, they must eat no flesh, and they must not marry. If both boys live, the more intelligent of the two is selected.

While we were travelling in *Hakari*, we met some emissaries of *Marshimon*, who were on their way to the Vali of *Van*. As it appeared from the conversation of these emissaries, there is a dispute between *Marshimon* and *Nimrud*, his cousin, who has become a Catholic. This noble claims some lands, and his claim is supported by the French Consul. With regard to this matter, *Marshimon's* emissaries were going to the Vali of *Van* to ask his intervention. We further learnt from the emissaries that Nestorians were often attacked by Kurdish bands, but, thanks to the mountainous situation of the place, the Nestorians of *Qudshanis* were able to defend themselves. The condition of the remote villages on the plains is, however, worse than that of the Armenians. The most abject poverty reigns there.

There is an *Assyrian mission* under the direction of the *Archbishop of Canterbury*. We met in *Tiflis* the *Rev. G. J. McGillivray*, the head of this mission, who was on his way to *Qudshanis*. He travelled with us from *Tiflis* to *Tabriz*, and accompanied us to *Etchmiadzin*, where he was presented to the *Catholicos*. He has now published an account of his journey, giving his impression of *Etchmiadzin*, comparing the Armenian Church with the Syrian, and describing some characteristics of the Armenians. Of *Etchmiadzin* he says: "To one familiar with the ordinary type of monastery, whether in East or West, *Etchmiadzin* is a surprise. The idea one associates with a monastery is an institution to which men withdraw from the world to lead an ascetic and contemplative life. It is, naturally, a surprise then, at *Etchmiadzin* to find no trace of this ideal. This opinion is not gathered merely from the fact that the familiar monastic cell, with no furniture but a bed, a crucifix and a *prie-Dieu*, has given place to spacious and comfortable furnished apartments. It is gathered rather from what seemed to be the whole tone of the place. Such a notion was evidently regarded as an antiquated superstition, which we in this enlightened age may be thankful to have outgrown. Frankly we have at *Etchmiadzin*, not a monastery, but a university, a Christian and a religious university, certainly, but still frankly a university. Many of the monks are graduates of German and other European universities. They are students, teachers and scholars. They superintend the instruction of several hundred boys and young men, and they devote themselves to works of literature and research of a kind quite comparable to that done by English and German scholars. The *Catholicos* is surrounded by a large modern educational establishment in close touch with all our Western civilisation and learning, in a remote district of Russia. So in *Etchmiadzin* we see every sign of material and intellectual progress. *Etchmiadzin* is more or less typical of all modern Armenian Monasteries."

To this must be added a word on the well-known hospitality which is shown to strangers.

On our travels, we learnt that the bishops had sent messages to the priests of all the villages in their dioceses through which we were likely to pass, directing them to give us hospitality and any assistance in their power. This procedure is adopted towards all Europeans who are travelling for purposes of study and research.

Mr. McGillivray, speaking of the seat of Marshimon at Qudshanis, says :—

“ It is in a remote mountain village, where the standard of learning is typified by his archdeacon and priest of the Cathedral Church, who knows just enough to read his service-books, and on week-days may be seen with his oxen *treading out the corn*, as his forefathers did 3,000 years ago.”

He says further :—

“ But indeed, the two places are typical of the two nations. Etchmiadzin is the centre of a large and prosperous nation. For, although the Armenians have suffered much from persecution, they have never been well nigh annihilated, as the Syrians have ; and, wherever they are, they prosper. Qudshanis is the centre of a little handful of mountaineers. Once, indeed, the Syrian Church was far greater than the Armenian, but now this little handful is all that is left.”

Speaking of the Armenians generally, he says :—

“ Although the Armenians are continually clamouring for foreign protection against their oppressors, still one does see among them some signs of self-help, a determination to make their own way in spite of obstacles. Another sign of this spirit is the fact that the Armenians in Russia have steadily refused to be absorbed into the Russian Church and, in spite of heavy pressure, they have kept their independence.”

He says in conclusion :—

“ The reader may get the impression of the Armenians as a vigorous prosperous nation, and of the Syrians as a moribund remnant. And yet although there would be some truth in such an impression, it is not the whole truth. For example, I doubt whether the best of the Syrians would smile, as my friend the Armenian Bishop did, at the idea of a life of contemplation, provided one managed to make him grasp the idea. The Syrians have, in the past, had their great contemplatives and mystics,* like Isaac of Nineveh. And, although there are none now, there still lingers a debased form of their fore-fathers' piety, which might again be awakened into spiritual life.”

The Rev. Mr. McGillivray does not speak of Nestorians in Persia, and especially of those in the town of Urumia, where they are very prosperous. Many of them have returned thither after making their fortunes in America. There is also among them a movement for the promotion of national education ; and they have their own national newspaper, entitled *Kukhva* (Star) ; there are other newspapers, published by American, Catholic, and Russian Missions.

* Armenians have also had theirs.—A.R.

There is nothing of which Armenians are more desirous than to see neighbouring races advance in civilisation. The troubles of the Armenians would be at an end if all the contiguous peoples, such as Kurds, entered on the path of progress and enlightenment.

At first we had a plan to journey with the Rev. Mr. McGillivray to Qudshanis and from there to Adana, but we changed our minds. I should add, fortunately, for this is what Mr. McGillivray reports :—

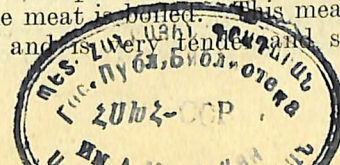
“ On Friday, September 19th, just as I was leaving the village of Tkhumia Gawaia, a party of ten or a dozen seized my mules, cut down the loads, and walked off with my property in all directions.”

The district of *Aghbak* is almost the only district of *Hakari* that is exclusively populated by Armenians. The chief city of *Aghbak* is *Bash-Kale*, which was formerly a great fortified town. In this district is also *Der*, with the famous monastery of *St. Bartholomew*. I have already spoken about the Patronal Festival at that place, at which, through the hospitality of the abbot, we had the great pleasure of being present during our stay in the monastery. All the details abide in our memories—the pilgrims, the sacrificial rite, with the subsequent distribution of meat to the poor, and, not least, the pretty dances performed by little girls, singing and playing on national instruments. It is impossible to forget the lovely dances of these small children, ranging in age from six to eight, who, while their parents and other relations were enjoying themselves at a banquet in the large hall, were dancing outside in a pitch-dark passage. They danced simply for the joy of it, as there was no light,—they had not a chance of showing off. Here was a striking instance of “ art for art's sake.” But our electric batteries did not allow their graceful movements to be wasted on the darkness. Next morning we asked the children to put themselves in dancing postures that we might photograph them. With some hesitation and shyness, they did so, but we were disappointed in the result, for the movements were now done to order and no longer spontaneous ; another instructive admonition that art should always spring forth, untutored, at the bidding of nature.

A deputation was sent by the pilgrims, inviting us to attend the *sacrificial rite*. The abbot was present and the priest officiated. After some hymns, he read a portion of the New Testament, containing the narrative of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, and, when he came to the passage which tells how Christ broke the bread and distributed it to the people, the priest took from the deacon five loaves, which the latter had been holding all this time, cut them, and distributed them to those who were present.

By the express wish of the pilgrims, we received from them a very large portion of their sacrificial meat as provision for our journey. The sacrificial rite is performed in the following way.

Before the sacrifice, the priest, accompanying the action with a prayer, gives the sheep three pinches of salt. For this reason, no salt is used when the meat is boiled. This meat is entirely different from ordinary meat, and is very tender and savoury. The victims are



brought by the pilgrims. Some are given in anticipation of a benefit, *e.g.*, a father gives a sheep, hoping that the gift may bring about his son's recovery from illness; others are offered in fulfilment of a conditional vow, *e.g.*, by one who has said: "If a certain member of the family, who is now in foreign lands, seeking his fortune, returns in safety, I will give a ram as a sacrifice."

Early that morning, when we were on our walk around the place, we were astonished to find pools of blood in the courtyard. One of our party feared that the Kurds had been committing outrages during the night; but, though the shedding of human blood in the courtyard of St. Bartholomew's was no unusual exploit of the Kurds, on this occasion they were innocent; it was only the pilgrims fulfilling their vows. We were very grateful for the sacrificial meat they gave us, as it furnished a delicious meal for some days.

The town of *Aghbak* is the chief attraction of *Hakari*; the latter for the most part consists of desolate mountain villages inhabited by Kurds. If a traveller has not provided himself with food, he will probably find it impossible to procure any in those regions, as there are no shops in Kurdish villages, and no fruit. Along the routes, however, in some of the villages, there are *Khans*, where fodder for horses can be obtained; perhaps one might be even so fortunate as to get eggs or bread. The Kurds seem to eat nothing but bread, sour milk, and, in some places, cheese and eggs; they do not eat flesh, and no fruit is to be had.

It is usual for our muleteer previously to make his arrangements as to the village where we should make a halt at sunset, when our day's journey is done, in order to rest for the night and get food for our horses. (In these mountainous regions it is impossible for horses to find their way in the dark.) On approaching such a village we are greeted by huge wolf-like dogs. To avoid them, we draw up our legs from the flanks of our steeds. The muleteer uses his big stick to defend his horses, but the latter seem accustomed to treatment of this kind. Then we are surrounded by the people of the village—men, women and boys—as we are led to our resting place.

Kurdish houses are mostly hovels sunk in the ground, without windows; light comes in through a hole in the ceiling. Our resting place generally consists of two compartments—one, the landlord and his family share with the horses, cattle and other domestic animals. This is—for both human beings and livestock—sitting-room, bedroom, and kitchen combined. In the middle of the room a great hole is dug, which to an outsider looks like a well, but is really an oven, where the people do their cooking and bake their bread. There is no chimney, consequently the room is full of smoke. The earth forms the floor; carpets are only found where the family sit.

Kurdish women do not hide themselves from men; unlike the Turkish women, they have their faces uncovered. Some Kurdish girls have good features, but Kurdish women age very quickly; they work in the fields, where they often give birth to their children, as they

do not suffer in childbirth, like civilised women. They often carry home the new-born infant, and next day resume their work in the fields.

Our own compartment is a small passage leading into the one-roomed house, from which it is separated by a door. The population of the one-roomed house is, to-night, augmented by the presence of our horses. Our luggage is unloaded by the muleteers and placed in our compartment. After this is done, before it is quite dark, we saunter out to have a look at *the village*, which, being small, can be seen in a very short time, and we get acquainted with all its attractions and its inhabitants in a few minutes. Its natural attractions are a spring and a picturesque valley; in addition to these it possesses some ruins of old historic buildings belonging to the time when the inhabitants were civilised Armenians. This anachronistic contrast of the civilised past and the barbaric present is manifested in many *Kurdish villages*; sometimes, among the collection of miserable hovels sunk in the earth, one comes across buildings of beautiful architecture. These belong to the times when the inhabitants of the districts were industrial, and Armenian culture flourished.

Further off, on the other side of the valley stretch the *tents*, where—as the weather is still warm—many Kurds live. At this season of the year, the village is almost deserted; the people live in the tents, taking the animals with them. The valley is covered with sheep, which pasture there. We visit the tents and talk to the occupants. Some of the women are weaving, others making carpets. The men are greatly interested in us. They ask for remedies for different diseases—Kurds have a notion that all Europeans are doctors. One of them earnestly implored us to give him something to cure his child, who was bald. There is no doubt that Mr. George Sims would do a good business if he introduced Tatcho among the Kurds.

A fact that strikes the traveller is that *Kurdish children* go about almost naked. This is not always a sign of poverty, but is due to neglect, for, when we were attempting to photograph a group of these children their mothers came and took them away, and we noticed that the mothers themselves were gorgeously dressed and wore gold ornaments.

In the village, by the side of the rivulet, our attention was arrested by a little girl who was washing down the oxen in the water. This was done so methodically and thoroughly, with such untiring pains, that we were astonished at the child's sense of cleanliness with regard to the animals, for, judging by her own appearance and that of other Kurdish girls, neatness and cleanliness are by no means characteristic of the Kurds.

After a stroll, we returned to our quarters and made arrangements for next day's *zaptiehs*.* After this was done, we went to pay our respects to the host and his family. Our host, on this occasion, is the

Zaptiehs—Turkish policemen.

chief of the village. We shake hands with him and try to do the same with the women, who are laughing, probably not understanding this civility. They all gaze at us with great interest. The chief introduces his family, which consists of four wives, and a collection of children, girls and boys of all ages. He is a man over sixty years of age; his youngest wife does not look more than twenty. He informed us he was going to marry another still younger. Marriage seemed an interesting theme to him. His first question was as to the number of wives we had. When he heard we were bachelors he was greatly astonished, and said that that could soon be remedied here, kindly offering, at the same time, his sister to one of our party, to take to England as a wife, provided we gave enough money for her. Next morning, to our surprise, he introduced the subject again and attempted to strike a bargain. We expressed our admiration of his sister, but courteously declined, saying we were unworthy of her.

We returned to our own quarters. The host kindly sent some carpets to cover the bareness of the earth floor, but we politely declined them, preferring our own camp-beds, which were provided with insect proof sheets. Then we prepared our supper, which consisted of eggs, boiled by our host, tinned meat, chocolate, of which one of our party had a large supply, *tout* (dried mulberries), cheese, which was given to us at the monastery at Der, and tea, prepared by ourselves. After supper, we indulged in conversation on different subjects, which had been suggested to us by our observations during the day; and then we retired to our camp-beds, with the resolution to rise at day-break. Our muleteer generally comes to wake us; in some cases, we need no awakening, because we are aroused by a sound caused by the striking of two boards against each other. This comes from a far-off Armenian village, and it is a call to church, bells being forbidden.

After Armenia came into the hands of the Turks, although Armenians were permitted to hold their own religion, obstacles were put in the way of their building churches. No church bells were allowed. If the walls of a church were still standing, it was permitted to build a dome over them; if by any chance permission was granted for the building of a new church, there were regulations as to its height and design, so that it might not differ greatly from an ordinary house. (See Ricavt: *Histoire de l'état présent de l'Empire Ottoman* 1670.) This explains why all the beautiful churches and monasteries, which adorn Turkish Armenia, belong to the period before the coming of the Ottomans. Even now in several parts of Armenia, the sound of church bells is not heard.

We have ourselves answered these calls to church in the early morning and found, indeed, the churches built in recent times to differ very little in appearance from ordinary houses; but the ancient Armenians have left so many beautiful churches and monasteries everywhere that there is little need to build new ones. In these regions we did not come across a single mosque, either ancient or modern, elaborately built. The mosques here resemble bare cellars,

with a small recess to serve as a pulpit. They generally stand near a spring of water. Each mosque has a narrow passage through which the water runs for the ablutions of the believers. From the outside, a mosque looks just like any other house.

To our surprise, no objection was made by the Kurds to our entering their mosque. This contrasts strongly with the behaviour of the Persians and Turks, as, in Persia we were forbidden to enter the courtyard of a mosque for the purpose of photographing it.

In the morning we meet our muleteers and ask them whether their horses have had good stabling and food, and after receiving a satisfactory reply, order them to make preparations for resuming the journey. Fresh *zaptiehs* have come and, having had breakfast, we are now ready. It is just past four o'clock. During the day, before our halt at sunset, we make two—sometimes three—stoppages for the sake of meals, and rest for our horses. The stopping places are selected by our muleteer, and are generally by the side of a stream and in a neighbourhood where fodder can be procured. As a rule, we do not mount our steeds at starting, but walk beside them for about an hour for exercise; we repeat this walk several times in the course of the day, as continual riding is fatiguing. Our muleteers do not seem to understand this, and continually ask us: "Why do you walk when you are paying for horses to ride?" Often these walks are compulsory, as we have to descend steep ridges which are difficult for animals, even if they have nothing to carry. The road is, for the most part, hilly and rocky. As a rule we are given mounted *zaptiehs*, they go on before us, from one stage to another, where they change. They are a source of information and we are glad to chat with them. We also stop nearly all the people that we meet on the road and try to enter into conversation with them.

It is a surprising fact that throughout the whole journey from Persia to Van, we did not come across a single Turkish village. The villages are mostly Kurdish, but, from halfway to Van, Armenian villages become predominant, and near Van, the Kurdish ones disappear entirely. Another important fact is, that most of the officials and *zaptiehs* of Hakari are Kurds.

To our surprise, we found, in several Kurdish villages, one or two Armenian houses. On our inquiring how it was that Armenians lived in a Kurdish village, and were so few in number, it was explained that formerly the particular village was not Kurdish, but Armenian. At the time of the massacres, the Armenians all fled, leaving behind them their houses and property. Soon Kurds came and took possession of all this, and, when the former owners returned to their homes, the Kurds refused to give them up. Complaints to the Governor were of no avail. All over Armenia cases like this abound. This occupation of Armenian houses and property has had the effect of making Kurds—to a very small extent—settlers; formerly Kurdish agriculturists were unknown; the Kurds were nomad, and their main occupations were the breeding of sheep and cattle, and—to some extent—weaving and carpet-making. Some employed themselves in the black art of annexing the property of others.

During the summer months they live in tents on the mountains, with their flocks and herds ; in the winter months, they are uninvited guests in Armenian villages, as Kurdish villages are few.

Now, the lands abandoned by the fugitive Armenians were already cultivated, so the Kurds gladly occupied them, as they had neither ability nor inclination to till their own lands. This occupation of Armenian lands by Kurds is one of the vital questions of the present crisis, and we will return to the subject later.

As we draw near to the *Armenian villages*, the scene gradually changes. The houses are better built and we see trees and other vegetation. There are some shops, though not many, and things have a more prosperous aspect—the people are cleaner and better clad. One sees a building which is more conspicuous than the rest ; that is *the school* ; in some places there is a small library in the same building. You always ask for the *schoolmaster*, not for the priest, because the former is better educated, more alive to the sorrows of the people and more energetic in working for them. In modern Armenia, it is not the priest who leads ; *the priests* are compelled to adapt themselves to the needs of the people in order to justify their existence.

In some *Armenian villages* fruit is abundant—even so abundant as to be partly wasted. When we asked the people why some of it was not taken to be sold in the neighbouring villages where there was none, the reply was that, in the first place, they were afraid of attack from the Kurds—the roads were unsafe. (The evidence of the truth of this statement is supplied by the fact that foreigners or anyone of importance in the country, or any well-to-do people, are provided by the Government with a guard when they travel.) Secondly, because there were *no facilities of communication* at present ; but, if order is established in the country and railways are introduced, agriculture, industries and trade will flourish. At present, in the regions south of Van, there is no order whatever and the Turks are not masters of the place. The Kurdish villages themselves complain of Kurds ; they, too, confirm the fact that there is no safety on the roads. To a certain extent, these Kurdish villages, inhabited by settlers, are suffering in the same way as the Armenian villages. As a matter of fact, there are *Kurds and Kurds*. Some of them occupy themselves entirely in plundering attacks either on Christians or on their fellow-Kurds. In other cases, the villages are attacked by hostile tribes. This is the reason why the settled Kurd always demands the strong hand for the restoration of order ; he is convinced that the Turks are no match for the Kurdish outlaws, and look on the Russians with a favourable eye.

(To be continued.)



"Our Kurdish host, on this occasion, is the Chief of the village."
See text.



"On the other side of the valley stretch the tents where at this season many Kurds live." See text.

As Others See Us.

An individual may lose himself in this colossal city, but, hide himself how he may, he will inevitably be unearthed when he is wanted. An Association—and a foreign Association to boot, though its members are mostly British subjects—is, perhaps, more like the proverbial ostrich who hides his head in the sand to avoid detection. All our innate modesty, whether we base it on the number of our members, or on the objects of our Association, availed nothing in our being promptly brought to the light of day by that restless and ubiquitous seeker after knowledge, the representative of one of the great daily papers of London. We are, indeed, forcibly reminded of Mark Twain's story to children regarding the discovery of America. "Are you Mr. Columbus?" said the natives to the great Genoese on his first landing on their island. "Yes," said Columbus; "and are you the Americans?" "Yes," said the natives; and then, looking at one another, they exclaimed: "We are discovered!"

"*The Evening News*" has set itself the task of discovering "The Foreign Clubs of London," and "The Armenian United Association" forms the XIVth of the series in its issue of February 16th. We feel so honoured by the kindly and flattering terms in which reference is made to us that we give below the article in full. ED., *Ararat*.

THE ARMENIAN UNITED ASSOCIATION.

By JULIUS M. PRICE.

The Armenians are so distinctly cosmopolitan that it is not surprising to find that their club in London is representative of many nationalities, and at the gatherings of its members there is heard a diversity of languages which is in itself convincing evidence of the world-wide dissemination of this ancient nation. But whilst this is perhaps one of the principal characteristics of any large gathering of Armenians, it must not be inferred that it is any the less united or patriotic—rather the contrary, in fact, and of this I had undeniable proof on the occasion of an interesting visit I paid the members recently at one of their re-unions held in the Elysée Assembly Rooms, Bayswater.

It was somewhat of a festive assemblage, and there was perhaps a larger muster than usual, as it was Christmas Eve, which is considered one of the most important days of the year amongst Armenians the world over. Christmas Day according to the Armenian Gregorian Faith is observed on January 19. There is no Armenian church in London, but a priest comes from Manchester, where there is a large Armenian colony, at certain intervals, and gives a service in London.

VERY LITTLE SMOKING.

There was nothing, however, of a religious character about the proceedings on this occasion. The hall was prettily decorated with

evergreens, so it had a certain Christmassy appearance, though holly and mistletoe were wanting to quite complete it. A sort of tea-fight, with a *conversazione* and concert thrown in, was in progress, and although, as far as I could make out, Armenian, Russian, and German were a good deal spoken, it struck me that English predominated. One noticed at once the deference which was shown to the ladies by reason of the absence of the cloud of tobacco smoke which one always associates with club gatherings of this description, for, although smoking was allowed, very few of the men appeared to indulge in it. This struck me as quite in marked contrast to what is so particularly characteristic of most of these gatherings of the foreign colonies where cigarettes and cheap cigars are the order of the day, and one can almost cut the atmosphere with a knife.

There was a feeling of genial cordiality and friendship around. Everyone seemed to know everyone else, but one realised that something deeper in sentiment than mere club membership drew all these people together. It was the old saying that "blood is thicker than water" exemplified, and here in this Bayswater Assembly Room were being kept alive the traditions of an ancient race. I was so much impressed by this flight of fancy that I remarked on it to Mr. Aram Raffi, the honorary secretary, a most intellectual gentleman through whose courteous invitation I was present. His reply convinced me that my reasoning was sound, and that I had struck the right note. He spoke English perfectly.

A KINGLESS NATION.

"We are a nation without a king, and with no political independence, but we have always proved that we are an unfettered nation, nevertheless, in spite of the fact that we are forced to live under different dominations, for whether we are naturalised English or any other nationality, we are still Armenians, although, of course, we loyally fulfil the duties of citizenship in the country we have adopted." The subject was evidently one he had at heart, and on which, as the Americans would say, "he had spread himself."

"You see, it's this way," he continued with much earnestness. "There is something imperishable that has kept us together as an independent nation; we have a national literature which comes down to us from the earliest ages, and our great writers of ancient and modern times have been published and studied. We have literary associations and clubs. We have not only our own novelists and poets, but we have translations of what we consider the best literature of the world, as, for instance, of your great English writers, such as Darwin and Herbert Spencer, and other philosophical and scientific authors, as well as Shakespeare and Dickens.

"We also have our own newspapers and magazines in all cities where Armenians are numerous. Besides this, we have our national art and education. In Asia Minor, for instance, our neighbours the Turks and the Kurds have no schools at all, but we have ours every-

where. Many Armenians are studying the various sciences and arts in the universities of France, Germany, Switzerland and Russia, and some also in England.

CIVILISING ASIA MINOR.

"Other nations preserve their nationality by reason of their physical strength—by the sword—because they believe that might is right, but we Armenians believe that Light is might, and that is what we teach our children, and where we are more in contact with the civilised nations than the Turks or the Kurds. If you find us in the capitals of Europe it is only temporarily—we want to study the ways of the world and take home the best of what we have learned, for we feel we have a civilising mission in Asia Minor—and it is for that reason our children are taught to speak Armenian, whatever country they may be born in."

The conversation, interesting though it was, looked like developing into a lecture, and several members were gathering round us listening intently. I recollected I had come to learn something about the actual club, and so was constrained to interrupt his flow of eloquence, but the Armenian United Association is not out for gaiety in the sense that is understood in other foreign clubs in London. They are evidently serious folk, these Armenians, for in reply to my query as to whether they ever indulge in any wilder excitement than tea drinking or an occasional concert or conference, Mr. Raffi informed me that they never have banquets, if that was what I meant.

"We don't think much of eating and drinking—we go in for ideas—food is to us a secondary matter." On hearing this ponderous statement, a very charming lady who was standing by remarked with a merry laugh that "of course it is well known that Armenians never think of anything so commonplace as food—they live on cold water and love." To which interesting statement I, of course, felt bound to reply that the régime evidently agreed with her, judging by her looks.

But if there are no Epicurean festivities, there are, however, social gatherings of a lighter character—and even dances now and then, and this particular afternoon was one of these frivolous occasions, for there was an entertainment in progress—with music and singing, and an English lady sang an Armenian folk lore song with much expression, although she did not understand a word of the language, I was told. English seemed to predominate, though, even in the inevitable speech-making, which concluded the proceedings, an Irish gentleman in particular giving us a humorous effusion which was quite a gem of Hibernian eloquence.

PLANS FOR A PERMANENT ABODE.

The club at present meets in the Elysée Rooms on Sunday afternoons, and only once a month, but premises have been taken recently which will provide a reading room, library, and other accommodation for the "social intercourse of members," as the rules put in, in fact the

usual features of a small club. It is intended, however, to continue the tenancy of the Elysée Rooms for concerts, conversaziones and so forth. It is hoped that by moving into a permanent abode the membership list will swell considerably, as at present it only contains some eighty names, but as there are always many guests at the monthly gatherings the Assembly Rooms are none too large.

The actual Armenian colony in London is about 400 strong and is chiefly composed of Turkish, Persian, Russian, and Indian Armenians, and ladies are eligible for membership. At all the meetings a tea is provided gratis and there is generally an "entertainment" of some description. The subscription to the club is ten shillings a year or half a crown a quarter, with an entrance fee of five shillings.

In the rules it is somewhat quaintly stated that "there will, however, be no objection to higher voluntary rates for those who are in a position to exceed this amount for the sake of keeping up the status and utilising to the utmost the objects of the Association."

Zeitun.*

By M. PHILIPS PRICE.

The wild character of this country and the constant state of warfare, causing only the fittest to survive, have produced among the highland Armenians a type of humanity to which it is hard to find an equal, even among the wild tribes of the Caucasus. For two days I passed through the most gorgeous alpine scenery—precipitous valley sides and deep gorges, forested with pine and cedar of Lebanon, above which towered the peaks of the Beirut Dagħ, clothed in its veil of autumn snow. At a point beyond which a mountain torrent passes through a deep gorge I came upon a rocky slope above which towered a precipice. On this slope were piled in heaps, like packs of cards, the houses of the well-populated town of Zeitun.

The town is one of the most remarkable in the whole of Asia Minor. It is not too much to say that it is still practically independent of Turkish rule. It is true a battalion of Turkish troops occupy a barracks overlooking the town and a Turkish civil governor resides in the town, but the former can do little when the whole population disappear at a moment's notice in guerilla bands into the mountain, and the latter

* Mr. M. Philips Price, who has just finished a journey to the highlands of Lesser Armenia—that is, the south-eastern vilayets of Asia Minor—has written his experiences in a series of articles in the "Manchester Guardian."—E.D., A.

is merely a figure-head, specially selected by the Turkish Government for combined amiability and incapacity, so as not to ruffle the Zeitunlis. The Zeitun Armenians have been in history—and still are to some extent—the terrors of the countryside. One can hardly imagine an Armenian vieing for strength, physique, and bravery with a mountain tribesman of Kurdistan and the Caucasus, if one judges Armenians by the specimens that one sees in the coast towns. But the traveller who goes inland and sees the Armenian in places like Zeitun will realise the truth of the principle that mankind becomes what his environment makes him, in spite of his racial and national characters. Give an Armenian a mountain stronghold and ten centuries of freedom, and he will beat the Dagestani for bravery or the Kurd for rascality. It is enough to recall what happened in 1896; at the time when Armenians were being slaughtered wholesale in Asia Minor, the Zeitunlis held at bay an army of 10,000 Turkish troops for several months, captured a whole battalion, and were only induced to return to their mountain in peace by the intervention of the foreign consuls at Aleppo.

THE REAL RULERS.

The present position in Zeitun is almost inconceivable even for Turkey in the twentieth century. Although nominally the "Crescent" flies over the Kaimakam's office in the town, the government is practically in the hands of a couple of noble Armenian families, whose ancestors have ruled Zeitun for centuries, and the Armenian Gregorian Bishop. The Turkish authorities are almost unable to do anything in the town without the support of these men. The state of affairs may be judged when I say that no one in the town and surrounding districts has paid taxes to the Government in living memory, and out of the 300 recruits levied from Zeitun for the Ottoman army each year only five went to serve this year, and the rest took to the mountains, and are all outlaws and brigands plundering Turkish caravans and Government convoys.

The day after my arrival in the town I was commanded to come and see the Armenian Bishop, who promptly made me stay in his "palace," which was like a disused cattle-shed. The Bishop was a gigantic figure, a Zeitunli born and bred, who had been all through the wars with the Turks, and seemed more acquainted with Mausers and Mannlichers than with doctrines of Monophysitism and Mariolatry. In the course of that day I went to visit one of the noble families of Zeitun, who lived in a real mediæval castle perched at the top of a precipice, from the windows of which one looked down 200 feet right into a gorge. The noble aristocrat wore quaint Armenian costume, and was armed to the teeth with knives, rifles, and revolvers, many of which were actually manufactured by the Zeitunlis themselves.

A SUNDAY SERVICE.

The following day being Sunday, I attended High Mass in the Gregorian church, at which the Bishop officiated in full robes. The little church was a gaunt, bare, fortress-like building, at the edge of a

cliff, which had defied storm and siege for centuries. At the church I met, to my surprise, all the representatives of the Turkish Government authorities, such as there are in Zeitun, including the Kaimakam, the military commander, and the Mufti, or chief Mahometan mullah. They had all come to attend Mass, which, as I was told, was being said by the Bishop in honour of the foreign visitor.

After service we all retired to the vestry, Turkish officials, Armenian ecclesiastics, and myself, and a huge spread was produced, with wine and cognac. Toasts of everlasting friendship between Christian and Mussulman, Osmanli and foreigner went thick and fast. My reply, beginning in feeble Turkish and ending in French, expressed a hope that these gatherings might be more frequent, and then the Eastern Question would be at an end. It was the first time I had ever made a political speech before such a mixed audience in the vestry of a mediæval church in a mountain fastness of Armenia.

That evening the other side of the picture was seen. About two hours after dark a bugle call sounded, followed by some rifle shots on the rocks above Zeitun. We all jumped up from dinner at the Bishop's house, and rushed to the balcony. Was it a surprise attempt at a massacre by Turkish soldiers? No, it was only a false alarm. The second company of the infantry battalion had been up in the mountains trying to catch an Armenian outlaw who had stolen the sheep of a Turkish shepherd lower down the valley. They had missed the outlaw but got the sheep, and were driving them into the compound at the Government House. As they entered the town they were attacked by a party of Zeitunli brigands, whom they drove off after a skirmish, and those were the shots we had heard.

If the Turks were wise they would recruit a local militia from among the Zeitunlis and make them police their own country under the Sultan's name. The Zeitunli's pride would be touched at once and he would be the most loyal and devoted Osmanli if he were treated with a little tact.

Latest News from Armenia.

Now that the Powers and the Porte have come to an understanding as to a certain measure of reform which is due to the Armenian provinces, it is our earnest hope that there will no longer be any necessity for chronicling atrocities under this heading, but only the "latest news" of progress and development; and Turkey may rest assured that to the extent that justice and liberality are extended in their dealings with Armenians, to that extent will they find Armenians to be their loyal co-adjutors in the work of advancing the interests and the material development of the Empire.

That comparative quiet has quite recently reigned in the provinces is not yet due to the projected reforms casting their shadows before them, but has for its cause a heavy fall of snow which usually acts more efficiently than a force of Turkish police or gendarmerie in perceptibly diminishing crime.

From the records of the Patriarchate we reproduce the following :—

TARSUS—Vilayet of Adana. *January 23rd.*

Some time ago the daughter of one Ahmed Effendi, a Turkish official at Tarsus, was mauled and killed by some fierce dogs which abound in the village. The owners of these dogs, fearing the vengeance of the father, buried the body of the girl. Ahmed Effendi was, however, able to trace the grave, and the Turks responsible for the burial were punished.

As a sequel to this episode, Ahmed Effendi takes into his home a young Armenian girl of Nigdé (Adana) as a servant, and then gets a decision from the Sheri (Moslem religious) court that the girl was his daughter; whereupon he refused to part with her. The Armenian authorities endeavoured to recover the girl, and the Patriarchate, on its protest to the Grand Vizier, is informed by the Minister of Justice that a decision of the sacred court of Sheri cannot be overruled, and consequently the girl is not an Armenian.

SAIRT—Vilayet of Bitlis. *February 13th.*—Official telegram from the Vicar to the Patriarch.

Nine Armenian families of the village of Shato have been dispossessed of their lands and property by Hadji Mustapha Aga, chief of the Rashkatan tribe. In the village of Tapi, all Armenian lands have been confiscated by one Hadji Mehmed, who has begun to cultivate them. In spite of protests, the local authorities pay no attention to these forced expropriations.

MUSH—Vilayet of Bitlis. *February 17th.*—Official telegram to the Patriarchate.

Two Kurds, one of them a gendarme, have surprised and killed two Armenians of Sassoun, Sarkis of Gablijog, and Bedros of Markha. The authorities say that the murderers have escaped to the mountains, and cannot be arrested now.

Announcements.

THE ARMENIAN UNITED ASSOCIATION OF LONDON.

Conversaziones will be held during the next three months at the Elysée Galleries, Queen's Road, Bayswater, W., on the following dates :—

Sunday, March 8th. Vocal and instrumental music.
 „ April 19th. In celebration of the Armenian Easter Sunday.
 „ May 31st. Vocal and instrumental music.

NATIONAL FUND OF HIS HOLINESS THE CATHOLICOS, FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF ARMENIAN EDUCATION.

In our November issue we drew attention to this Fund, which was being raised as a memento of the celebrations in honour of St. Sahak and St. Mesrop. The Hon. Assistant Treasurer of the Armenian United Association of London is pleased to acknowledge receipt of the following contributions from our readers in distant lands, which will be duly forwarded to the proper destination :—

Mrs. Diana Agabeg Apar, Yokohama, £1.

S. H. Apar, Esq., Cossipore, Calcutta, £1.

Mrs. Apar, in forwarding her contribution, writes :—

“The Catholicos has taken a step in the right direction, and when this call has been met, he should make another call for another million roubles. You should suggest this in ‘Ararat.’”

We gladly respond to our correspondent's suggestion, and give prominence to it. We know full well that the question of education is nearest the hearts of those in authority, and such sympathetic references from far distant lands cannot but help to strengthen the resolve to prosecute, to its ultimate fulfilment, the grand task of national regeneration in the right way—by education.

LANTERN LECTURE.

On Tuesday, March 17th, a Lantern Lecture on the Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau will be given at 8 p.m. by Miss A. Bernard at The Assembly Hall, Notting Hill High School, Holland Park Avenue (corner of Norland Square), by kind permission of the School Council.

The proceeds will be given to the fund for establishing village schools in Armenia for the benefit of orphan and needy children.

Tickets may be had from—

Mrs. Chaplin, 13, Addison Gardens, Kensington.

Miss Robinson, 35a, Elsham Road, Kensington.

Mrs. Gregory, 36, Gunterstone Road, West Kensington.

Also from 101, Ledbury Road, Notting Hill.

First three rows, 3s. 6d. Reserved, 2s. 6d. and 1s.

Literary Section.

M. Archag Tchobanian, in his delightful lecture before a Parisian audience, not many months ago, on Armenian history and Armenian culture, unfolded some gems of Armenian poetry which, in spite of translation into a foreign tongue, must have conveyed to his hearers the sense of an inspiration which was out of the common. The majority of these, composed by the country people and sung by peasants, are handed down from generation to generation without trace of their true authors.

M. Tchobanian's lecture in French is being translated into other Continental languages, and an English version of it will also appear very soon. To whet the appetites of our readers for more of such delightful reading, we are privileged to give in advance English translations of four of these typical Armenian poems.

(1) A LOVE SONG.

With slippers that so lightly tread,
 Her little apron all of red,
 Pitcher in hand, upon her way
 She passes, through the golden day.

Sweet maid! For love of you I sigh—
 Have pity, and in passing by,
 Water my soul with hope, like dew,
 Lest I should die for love of you!

Like almond blossom in the spring,
 Ever beyond my reach you swing.
 Too long, too long, my heart has bled
 For that sweet blossom overhead.

So come in secret through the night,
 When moonlit fields are silver white;
 And here, beloved, with me stay
 Until the dawning of the day.

And we will suck the honied flowers,
 And drink the dew-drops' crystal showers;
 Till lulled by cooing doves we pass
 To earth, one with the flowers and grass.

So from our dust may daisies spring;
 And fortune fair their petals bring;
 Foretelling years of life to those
 Who dread in death their eyes to close.

Translated by E.R.S.

(2) Here is the second, composed some eighteen years ago, at the time of the tragic happenings in Turkish Armenia, when the men of Sassoun and of Khnouss died in their hundreds in an unequal struggle, fighting for their hearths and their homes. It is specially touching on account of its graceful complexity and the depth of its meaning. It is the rendering into song of what is noblest in man, the hero, through the combination of what is most tender and the most refined in life and in nature, a young and beautiful lover and a nightingale.

She walks where the dewy sunset
Has coralled the bushes red;
On her arm is jewelled bracelet,
Uncovered, her lovely head.

She sings on her way, and her singing
Has hushed the song from above
Of the rapturous brown bird, flinging
His passionate song of love.

For her beautiful voice is sobbing—
She praises her heroes true;
And the brown bird's heart keeps throbbing,
Throbbing the whole night through.

She is singing of Sassoun's heroes,
Of Khnouss and its deathless fame;
She sets with a thousand echoes
The nightingale's soul aflame.

And again, where the night winds shiver,
Goes forth the songster's note,
Over meadow, hill, and river,
Together, their voices float.

Like a choral from cloister ringing,
Sad, holy and soft, and then
It flies as an arrow, winging
Its way to the hearts of men.

The nightingale sings not of wooing,
Nor maid of her lover's name;
But ever her country's doing,
And ever its heroes' fame.

The song into silence went sighing;
The maiden turned slowly away;
But first came the nightingale flying,
And a kiss on her lips he lay.

Translated by A.G.S.

(3) Here is still another little song, composed at the same period, in all probability by one of those very men who are extolled in the poem above, by one of those patriots who were struggling for the sacred cause. We should note the martial swing, and above all, the optimism which pervades the outpourings of so persecuted a nation.

Comrade! do not despond,

But keep up your heart to the end.

See! there's a light in the valley,

And rest for us when we descend.

Courage! be valiant, be brave!

And keep up the march with a swing!

Hark! On the heights of the mountains

Already I hear the bells ring!

See! there the glad morning breaks;

March, do not question or quail—

We are fighting for justice and right,

And know that our cause cannot fail!

Translated by E.R.S.

(4) We will bring to an end our selections from this English translation of M. Tchobanian's captivating lecture by quoting another most characteristic of songs to be found in popular Armenian music. Here, too, we should notice that tendency towards hopefulness in a better future, the hope that springs eternal, without which the Armenian would long ago have been an extinct nation.

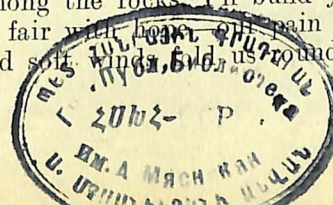
White dove, why do you through the day
Weep those sad tears that fall alway
Into the shallow brook below?

The white dove answered, moaning low,
Oh, gay-plumed jay! the world is sear—
Summer has gone—and winter drear
Has stilled the song of autumn's bird;
Then let my plaintive note be heard;
The springs and rills stand almost dry,
And fragrant blossoms fade and die;
Unless I weep, my heart will break.

Courage! the jay made answer—Take
New hope! The sun will one day fling
His golden light to call the spring;
And once again shall the bare earth,
In budding beauty, wake to birth.
So do not weep! A day shall be,
When joy will banish misery.

Come!—with spread wings—Oh, come, white dove!
Across the plains and far, above
Valley and tree; on mountain crest
Among the rocks, I'll build your nest
So fair with love, your pain shall cease,
And soft winds fold us round with peace.

Translated by A.G.S.



The Armenian United Association of London.

FOUNDED 1898. RECONSTRUCTED 1913.

General Council:

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This Association has been founded with the double object of (1) drawing together all Armenians in the British capital, bringing them into touch with the British public, and thus establishing a closer sympathy between the two nations; and (2) focussing in the centre of the civilised world the many questions, both social and national, which affect Armenia and the Armenians.

With the above objects in view, the Association is directing its energies to—

- (1) The establishment of a permanent habitation in London, which will embrace a hall for meetings, a reading-room and a library.
- (2) The organisation of social and literary gatherings.
- (3) The relief and education of Armenian orphans rendered destitute through chronic misrule in Armenia.
- (4) Watching the trend of political affairs affecting Armenia, and doing the utmost by pacific means towards the amelioration of the country and the people through (a) a Standing Committee, and by (b) the publication of literature.
- (5) The gradual raising of a fund for the establishment of an Armenian Church in London.

Membership is open to Armenians of both sexes.

Subscription:—Annual, 10/-; entrance fee, 5/-. Life Members, 5 guineas.

Sympathisers and friends of other nationalities are eligible for election as Hon. Members, but they have no voice in the management, and pay no subscriptions.

It will be evident that the above nominal subscription is just sufficient for the bare social functions of the Association. The more important functions are dependent for their success on the liberality of sympathisers, and donations are earnestly requested for the above national objects from those who are in a position to contribute. The response since the reorganisation of the Association has been very encouraging, but much more is needed to place the Association on a secure basis for prosecuting the work outlined above.

Communications affecting Membership, or any of the objects of the Association, should be addressed to

THE HON. SECRETARY,

44, Queen's Road,

Baywater, London, W.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

PERIODICALS CONNECTED WITH ARMENIA.

The Oriental World (formerly **Armenia**).—A monthly Literary and Political Magazine devoted to the literature and politics of the Near Eastern Countries. Edited and published by Arshag D. Mahdesian, 175, Fifth Avenue, New York, U.S.A. Foreign subscription \$2.00.

Pro Armenia.—An organ in support of reforms in Armenia and in Turkey. Annual subscription, 10 francs. 31, Villa d'Alesia, Paris XIV^e.

The Friend of Armenia.—Published quarterly. Annual subscription, 1s. 47, Victoria Street, London, S.W.

BOOKS, PAMPHLETS, MAPS, &c.

Armenia.—Its People, Sufferings and Demands. The British Armenia Committee, Queen Anne's Chambers, Westminster, London. 1d.

The Truth about Armenia, by EMILY J. ROBINSON. 1d., by post 1½d. One doz. copies, 1s., or 7/6 for 100 copies, post free. Apply to Miss Robinson, 35a, Elsham Road, Kensington, London, W.

Map of Turkish Armenia.—Enlarged edition of the Map appearing in this periodical, on cloth to fold, in cover, 1s. per copy. Apply to Assistant Secretary, The Armenian United Association, 44, Queen's Road, Bayswater, London, W.

The Church of Armenia.—Her History, Doctrine, Rule, Discipline, Liturgy, Literature, and Existing Condition, by Mgr. Malachia Ormanian, translated by G. Marcar Gregory V.D., 5s. net (postage 4d.). Apply to the translator, 36, Gunterstone Road, West Kensington, London, W.

Raffi's Works—Samuel, 8s.; Davit Beg, 8s.; Kaitzer I and II, 12s.; Khent, Djaleddin, 5s.; Khamsai Meliks, 5s.; Persia, 5s.; Khachakogh, 5s.; Salbi, 8s.; Tachkahajk, 3s.; Zahrumar, 5s. Apply Mrs. Raffi, 32, Richmond Gardens, Shepherd's Bush, London, W.

The People of Armenia.—A lecture delivered in Paris by Archag Tchobanian, translated into English by G. Marcar Gregory. Published by J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., London, 1s. 6d. net. This work will appear very shortly. Copies in any number can also be had through the Assistant Secretary, Armenian United Association, 44, Queen's Road, Bayswater, London, W.